

THE TYRRANY OF POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

J.P. Thackway

Around twenty years ago, we began to hear a new phrase - "Politically Correct" - or PC for short. Since then it has entered everyday speech and life, and is never far from us. Some dictionary definitions give the flavour of it:

"Language or conduct that deliberately avoids giving offence, for example on the basis of ethnic origin or sexual orientation."

"Conforming to a belief that language and practices which could offend political sensibilities (as in matters of sex or race) should be eliminated."

"Of, relating to, or supporting broad social, political, and educational change, especially to redress historical injustices in matters such as race, class, gender, and sexual orientation."

Put like this, PC seems almost reasonable. But then, as someone has pointed out, many dictionaries are PC too.

Examples

When we come to examples of PC, we see it as it is. Consider the female police recruit in 2006. This 19-year old, who had passed her written tests, was asked during her interview what she would do if she needed advice. She replied, "I would go to my sergeant and ask him for help." She then failed the interview for referring to the sergeant as "him," thus revealing her lack of "gender awareness."(!)

Other examples abound. A hospital manager bans Easter hot cross buns because they might offend Muslim patients. A nursery tells its children no longer to say "Baa, baa, black sheep" but "Baa, baa, *grey* sheep," out of consideration for black children. In school, "blackboard" is called some other name for the same reason. "Nitty-gritty" is out because of its supposed association with the slave trade (new for the 2007 anniversary of its abolition).

Gender-specific words are neutralised to no longer offend or exclude women. Therefore, headmaster/headmistress becomes head teacher; policeman is changed to police officer, fireman to firefighter, chairman to chair or chairperson. Mankind is deemed sexist and becomes humankind or humanity. Police Force is Police Service – as if the hint of authority is unacceptable. "Positive discrimination" bypasses suitable candidates for jobs in favour of women, ethnic minorities, disabled people, etc.

In addition, to prevent the least hint of anything pejorative, PC changes job titles. Vision Clearance Executive is a window cleaner, Education Centre Nourishment Production Assistant is a dinner lady, Waste Removal Officer is a dustman, Domestic Engineer is a housewife and Stock Replenishment Adviser is a shelf stacker.

How should we interpret PC? Is it as ludicrous as it seems – or is there a more sinister and dangerous dimension to this? Does it impinge upon the truth of God and the spread of the gospel? What ought to be our response to its challenges in our generation?

1. Some things about PC can be welcomed.

In its concern to avoid epithets that offend and upset people, it encourages us to consider others. This in principle is scriptural: "having compassion one of another ... be pitiful, be courteous" (1 Peter 3:8). This applies "especially unto them who are of the household of faith" but also "unto all men" (Galatians 6:9).

Who would deny that it is much kinder to refer to a child at school as having "special needs" rather than as "educationally sub-normal"? And not to label someone who suffers from

mental problems as an “idiot”? Moreover, any labels that arise from prejudice and cruelty are better removed from our vocabulary in order to love our neighbour as ourselves.

Wounding names that stigmatise disadvantaged people are the language of a fallen and heartless world. Where greater care is taken and sensitivity is shown, this must be acknowledged as right by Christians who are exhorted to “be kind one to another, tenderhearted...” (Ephesians 4:32). Regarding ethnic minorities who are here legally, we must “do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger” (Jeremiah 22:3). All this is seeing PC at its best.

However, PC is clearly more than calling for respect and good manners. It goes far beyond this into another realm that should cause us deep concern. That those who offend PC receive no forgiveness alerts us to something more in it. For instance, in 2004, when Robert Kilroy-Silk criticised Arabs in a newspaper column he had to resign from his job with the BBC – probably the most PC institution in Britain today. We hear of cases where the Police, with remarkable swiftness, have followed up complaints against good people who question the suitability of homosexuals to adopt children, and even a child at school playfully calling another child “Gay.”

What, then, is the true face of PC?

2. PC has a revealing history.

Historians tell us that PC it has its roots in Marxism. It was developed at the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt, Germany. Founded in 1923, this became the Frankfurt School – a group of thinkers who aimed to dismantle the Christian basis of the West because it prevented the spread of Communism. Agustin Blazquez expresses this succinctly,

“What was the problem with Western Civilization? Its belief in the individual, that an individual could develop valid ideas. At the root of Communism was the theory that all valid ideas come from the effect of the social group of the masses. The individual is nothing. And they believed that the only way for Communism to advance was to help (or force, if necessary) Western Civilization to destroy itself. How to do that? Undermine its foundations by chipping away at the rights of those annoying individuals.

One way to do that? Change their speech and thought patterns by spreading the idea that vocalizing your beliefs is disrespectful to others and must be avoided to make up for past inequities and injustices. And call it something that sounds positive: ‘Political Correctness...’

Political Correctness remains just what it was intended to be: a sophisticated and dangerous form of censorship and oppression, imposed upon the citizenry with the ultimate goal of manipulating, brainwashing and destroying our society.”
(www.newsmax.com/archives/articles/2002/4/4/121115.shtml).

Communism largely collapsed in the late 1980s, but PC may well be its continuance in a more subtle form. During the Cold War era, the West feared a Communist takeover – in God’s mercy that never came. And yet the agenda, techniques and aims of “the New Left” are very much with us in PC.

3. Most PC is needless and farcical.

This is clear because the zealous minority behind PC do not represent those they claim to represent. The helpful *Campaign against Political Correctness* website (www.capc.co.uk) makes this shrewd point,

“... those spouting political correctness assume that they have the *right to give opinions* for people they perceive to be from ‘minorities’ without usually first consulting the people they purport to speak for. E.g., people say that you should not use the term

'Brainstorming' as it could be offensive to people with epilepsy. Epilepsy Action, however, say, 'We are often asked about the word "brainstorming" and whether its use is acceptable. If the word is being used to describe a meeting where participants are suggesting ideas, then its use is *not offensive to people with epilepsy* ... people (are) using political correctness where it was not asked for, not needed and certainly not wanted.'

In the case of the female police recruit mentioned above – Laura Midgley of CAPC said, "In the 43 police forces in the country, there are 17,679 male sergeants and 2,671 female sergeants. Is it really a lack of gender awareness to say the word 'him' when, according to the police's own official figures, over 86% of sergeants are men?"

Another example. In October 2006, Greater Manchester police advised officers not to issue arrest warrants against Muslims at prayer times during Ramadan. The Manchester-based Muslim group, the Ramadan Foundation, criticised this policy. Mohammed Shafiq said, "It's stupid, lunacy, that police could even consider not arresting Muslims during Ramadan. I don't know where they get these ideas from and I'm glad an officer was clearly angry enough to leak the memo. Police shouldn't hesitate to arrest any Muslims they had planned to during Ramadan. We must all be equal under the law. If people think Muslims are immune from the law, it will only stir up tensions within the community."

This response begs the question *why* the decision was made. As Mr. Shafiq said, "I don't know where they get these ideas from." Yet get them they do, and so do so many other bodies and authorities in the UK and beyond. Apparently, 80% of people in the UK are fed up with PC, yet we are continually monitored, intimidated, corrected – and drip-fed Newspeak PC words like a catechism. But by whom? A respondent to a newspaper asked,

"Who are these people who have nothing better to do with their time than analyze and then criticise every word a public (or even semi-private) figure says? What a pity these do-gooders can't get a life, or even an occupation where they could actually do some good? Almost every phrase that is in current usage today has some kind of questionable background ...!"

The answer may well lie in the agenda behind PC. What is happening is that a militant, atheistic and unrepresentative minority are busily indoctrinating the rest of us to revise how we speak, what we believe, and how we view others.

4. PC has a hidden target.

The stupidity of PC tends to mask the fact that its real aim is at biblical Christianity. If PC wants to destroy the Christian foundation of British society (Psalm 11:3), then its target will be Christianity itself. It hates our message, and that is behind its pretended concern about it offending others who do not share its views – in reality it is because *it* does not share *our* views. The rugged doctrines of our message fall foul of PCs approved words and allowed vocabulary.

Although we see PC as an expression of atheistic, secular humanism or postmodernism, its inspiration is from a deeper source. It is the spirit of the age, under the control of "the god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4). It is the age-old concerted rebellion "against the Lord, and against his Christ" (Psalm 2:1-3; Acts 4:26). In seeking to break down the biblical and moral bulwarks, PC is really the guilty party.

a] It turns morality on its head.

PC makes the guilty innocent and the innocent guilty. It says it is "OK to be Gay" but not OK for a Christian Bed and Breakfast owner to refuse a Gay couple a stay in his own home. More than "not OK," such a man would now be classed a criminal for simply acting according to conscience and protecting his family.

The recent case of Scottish firemen threw this into relief. In conscience, they refused to distribute community safety advice at a Gay festival. All were disciplined and sent on a

“diversity training” course. This intolerance and brainwashing shows how far PC will go to get its way and make people follow its upside down values. In its view, sin is right and righteousness is wrong.

b] It has created double standards.

PC would make the teaching of scriptural morality taboo. Biblical words that brand wrong behaviour and that make value judgments are replaced with bland and meaningless alternatives. Thuggish pupils are not expelled from school but “excluded.” There is even a call to drop the term “yob” as it allegedly stigmatises young people. And yet, Christians who smack their disobedient children are “hitting” them and are guilty of “violent assault.” It is tragic to see the way children’s charities have jumped on the PC bandwagon and jointed to call to have parents’ right to smack banned.

Some nursery children must not be called “naughty” but showing “unacceptable behaviour.” Yet, PC is perfectly happy to sanction coarse, vulgar, foul and blasphemous language that transgress every one of God’s commandments. It has one law for the righteous and another law for everybody else. It says it hates censorship and yet would censor everybody who fails its litmus test.

c] It outlaws freedom of speech and expression.

For *its* agenda to prevail it polices our words and even our thoughts. An unwritten law governs what we can say or think, and people feel intimidated, looking over their shoulders. The implications for evangelism and contending for issues of national righteousness are clear. On the pretext of not offending other religions in our “multicultural society,” our exclusive gospel is anathema. Since Christianity has supposedly caused past injustices to women and various minorities, its call for biblical values is called a return to Victorian, repressive values. PC demands liberty for itself but would gag those who disagree with it. It is wonderfully tolerant with the feckless and the deviant but incredibly intolerant with the upright and biblical who venture to speak for the truth. PC would silence every voice except its own.

5. Our duty in the light of PC is clear.

It is largely to ignore it. In the small area where it confirms scriptural niceties and thoughtfulness, Christians have always been PC. In all the rest, with its evil origin and perverse application, we must see it for what it is.

1] PC has always been with us.

Philip Atkinson has a further definition of PC,

“The communal tyranny that erupted in the 1980s. It was a spontaneous declaration that particular ideas, expressions and behaviour, which were then legal, should be forbidden by law, and people who transgressed should be punished ... It started with a few voices but grew in popularity until it became unwritten and written law within the community. With those who were publicly declared as being not politically correct becoming the object of persecution by the mob, if not prosecution by the state.”

(<http://www.users.bigpond.com/smartboard/pc.htm>).

Put like this, perpetrators of PC are the enemies of God and the church. We find it condemned in the Scriptures, “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (Isaiah 5:20).

We also find those insisting upon their perverted protocol bravely resisted. The Hebrew midwives defied Pharaoh when his ethnic cleansing policy became PC (Exodus 1:17). Nebuchadnezzar’s PC decree about praying was ignored by Daniel (Daniel 6:10). It was PC to say that the disciples had stolen Jesus’ body (Matthew 28:11-15), but the apostles preached Christ and the resurrection because ““we ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). Let us do the same in our day, not causing needless offence, but not shunning the offense of the cross.

2] PC behoves us to contend for the faith in certain key areas.

a] "Gender issues," fuelled by Feminism,.

Those who marry, and become a family consisting of father and mother and their children feel almost victimised these days. They apparently discriminate against "families that come in all shapes and sizes." This is PC euphemism for unmarried mothers with children of multiple partners, same sex couples with adopted offspring, cohabiting couples and their illegitimate children. The confusion, blight, crime and expense this has caused our society is obvious. What is just as obvious is that it destroys manhood and womanhood, marriage, and the family – all that gives cohesion to society.

However, it is really Holy Scripture that is under attack: "he which made them at the beginning made them male and female" ... "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church" ... "That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth" (Matthew 19:4; Ephesians 5:25; Malachi 2:15). Instead of denouncing these other family models as immorality and sodomy, we are warned against being sexist, homophobic and committing "hate crime." However, let us not be cowed but courageous as we serve our generation by the will of God.

b] Crime and punishment.

This vexed issue has been a headache for successive governments. But PC has coined new phrases designed to intimidate those calling for traditional (biblical) ways of dealing with it. People are not sent to jail as punishment but *for* punishment – the subtle distinction means rehabilitation is the main goal. The word "punishment" is nearly taboo now. Therefore, prisons become almost like hotels, inmates can be called "Mr." and some must be allowed to vote. Many judges pass soft sentences in the first place – "the sword" (Romans 13:4) has become a slap on the wrist. What does God's word say to this PC? "Submit yourselves ... unto governors, as unto them that are sent by (the Lord) for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well" (1 Peter 2:13,14).

c] Homosexuality.

PC invents euphemisms to protect sodomites. It has hijacked the harmless word "gay" - originally meaning merry, light-hearted, brightly coloured, carefree – to mean this brand of moral wickedness. Perversion is now "orientation" instead. "Equality and diversity" ensure that the rights of such people are respected and their lifestyle never criticised. One word against it and an individual could find himself visited by police and warned about "hate crime," as some high-profile cases show. Therefore, PC is very selective when it comes to human rights and minority interests. It comes down on the side of those who are on the opposite side of biblical Christianity.

However, God showed His abhorrence of this vile practice in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24,25; 2 Peter 2:6). This is "an abomination" (Leviticus 18:22) – next only to sex with a beast (verse 23). Moreover, in Romans chapter one Paul declares such behaviour being given up by God to vile affections and "receiving in themselves that recompense of their error" (verses 26,27) – solemnly in our day the AIDs epidemic. We must not shrink from holding these convictions, and where necessary, saying so.

d] False religion.

Since the 1960s, Britain has seen its colonial past come home in waves of immigration. This has brought to us representatives of religions foreign to these shores – Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam, and more recently from Eastern Europe, Roman Catholicism. This is an excellent opportunity for home mission work – as numbers of Christians have found. However, with a nigh-apostate Established Church, and a weak, divided nonconformity, the gospel of Christ is not making conquests in its homeland that it might have done.

Moreover, it hands PC an opportunity to level the field in the name of respect and toleration. "Our multi-cultural society" is a buzzword for silencing the gospel. Which is why we hear of local councils banning Bibles from hospitals and hotels, university student unions rejecting

Christian Unions because of their exclusive basis of faith, and some over-zealous policemen warning open-air preachers not to preach about hell – who in turn should be reminded that they have no mandate to *make* the law, only to enforce it.

However, false religion is false because it worships “other gods” (Exodus 20:3) and makes “graven images” (Exodus 20:4,5), is “anathema” even if an angel from heaven preached another gospel (Galatians 1:8,9), and men “should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein” (Acts 14:15). Let us be as bold as the apostles were, since the same Lord is with us “always” (Matthew 28:20).

e] In the Church of God.

The spirit of the age has infiltrated the church in our day. And with it has come a PC that operates even in reformed circles. In our last magazine, we mentioned this in connection with the new role of women in today’s churches. The most glaring example was the Today’s New International Version – “the PC Bible” because it is full of “gender neutral” renderings instead of the generic “man,” “brethren,” etc.

Even among those who know better, PC has crept in. Certain issues are not discussed among us because they are deemed “secondary issues” or divisive. Matters like Bible translations, character of worship, the role of women in church, the pope as the Antichrist are studiously avoided in ministers fraternal and publications. It is noteworthy that although we sent review copies of Alan Macgregor’s *Three Modern Versions* to certain leading reformed papers and magazines, they have never reviewed it.

This is tragic because it creates “no go” areas in issues vital to our day. Fellowship tends to be shallow because it feels it has to observe the party line and keep to safe areas. Happy is that church, however, where openness to “all the counsel of God” prevails, and not Political Correctness but scriptural awareness governs all that we believe and do (Acts 2:42; 2 Timothy 3:16,17).

May God help us to discern these issues and “have understanding of the times.” Let us carry on as we have ever done, and never submit to the tyranny of Political Correctness. It is nothing other than the tyranny of Satan himself, the prince of darkness and the father of lies. Let us avowedly “be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:15). We do not depend upon a sympathetic climate to live out the Christian life and serve God. We rely upon the Lord of hosts who is with us. “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4).